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ABSTRACT

While school-based management (SBM) is increasingly becoming a part of state and district reform efforts, there is little evidence that it improves school performance. However, this may be an unrealistic expectation for a governance-oriented reform. SBM also can improve organizational performance not only when people at lower levels are brought into the decision-making process, but when these people are trained for their new roles and rewarded for achievement. This study examined whether and under what conditions high-involvement SBM, when combined with curriculum and instruction reforms, could improve school performance. Twenty-four schools in four North American school districts were studied using interviews and surveys. The results supported the importance of three elements in SBM: knowledge and skills training for those involved; access to information about the performance of the organization; and rewards granted for results. These findings contribute to a new understanding of SBM that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of mechanisms for sharing power. Also, to improve school performance, SBM must focus school-level educators' attention on performance rather than new management structures. (Contains 29 references.) (JPT)

New Boundaries for School-Based Management: The High Involvement Model

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Introduction

While school-based management continues to be a priority in state and district reform efforts across the country, there is scant evidence linking SBM to improved school performance (Ogawa & White, in press; Fullan, 1993). Part of the explanation, argued by us and others elsewhere (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992), is that improving school performance may be an unrealistic expectation for a *governance* reform that alters the balance of power within educational systems toward schools. A means-end relationship between governance and school improvement is difficult to argue in the absence of some kind of instructional guidance mechanism that sets forth the direction of change with regard to curriculum and instruction -- the technical core of schooling. Consequently, if one goal of reform is to create high performance schools, a key research question related to the evaluation of SBM is: Can SBM when combined with a push for curriculum and instructional reform produce school improvement? In other words, when a direction for curriculum and instruction is provided, does SBM enable schools to redesign themselves for high performance?

Also of interest to this research are the organizational design mechanisms associated with SBM. Traditionally, SBM policies (as well as research on SBM) have had a limited focus on issues related to power, such as how much power should be devolved to the school site and who should be the ultimate authority on the campus. However, what we know from decades of research in the private sector is that organizational performance improves not only when power is shifted down to lower levels of the organization, but also when those empowered are trained for their new decision making roles, have information to make informed decisions and are rewarded for high performance (Lawler, 1986). This framework of high involvement management offers hunches about conditions that might enable schools to create high performance organizations. Thus, if our goal is to create high performance schools, it is arguable that the boundaries of SBM need to be expanded beyond involvement of school-level people in organizational decision making; it must also

include increased professional development to prepare participants for expanded roles in the governance process and in the operation of the organization. Following the logic of high involvement management, school level participants also ought to have access to information related to management and performance, and local educators ought to be rewarded for their efforts that produce high performance.

In sum, the research reported here, which focuses on the utility of SBM for creating high performance schools, is distinguished in two ways. First, it evaluates SBM in a systemic reform context where there is a push for curriculum and instruction reform, either from the state or the district. Second, the study goes beyond traditional boundaries of SBM by applying a model of high involvement, developed in the private sector, to better understand mechanisms that may contribute both to the successful governance of schools and to curricular and instructional reform in classrooms. The findings confirm the importance both of nesting SBM within an instructional guidance system and of expanding the definition of SBM in order to create the capacity within schools to develop high performance through high involvement. For practitioners and policy makers, this research offers practical design and implementation strategies to help schools to improve their performance through SBM.

The High Involvement Framework

The recent history of SBM, under the rubric of community participation, decentralization or teacher empowerment, can be traced back to the 1960s. Then as well as now reformers often adopted SBM for ideological reasons as a means of democratizing schools (David, 1989; Malen, Ogawa & Kranz, 1990). Embedded in the theory of reform also was the purpose of school improvement. Through SBM, decision making authority would be extended down the professional hierarchy to stakeholders not traditionally involved -- teachers and parents -- and once empowered these groups who were closest to the students would make better decisions and school performance would improve. Schools

often were instructed to create councils of stakeholders at sites and those councils were vested with varying amounts of authority in the areas of budget, personnel and curriculum (Clune & White, 1988). Once councils were set up and power (at least on paper) was transferred, district offices felt they had accomplished the reform and were ready to move onto the next. Research on SBM was also concerned with questions related to politics (see, for example, Wohlstetter & McCurdy, 1991).

Lawler in his work in the private sector confirms the importance of power for improving organizational performance, arguing that it is a necessary but insufficient condition. Employees must have power -- including the areas of budget and personnel -- to make decisions that influence organizational practices, policies and directions. In Lawler's framework of high involvement management, there are three other organizational resources that need to be decentralized in order for employees to have the capacity to create high performance organizations:

- Knowledge that enables employees to understand and contribute to organizational performance. Knowledge includes technical knowledge to do the job or provide the service; business knowledge for managing the organization; and interpersonal skills for working together as a team.

- Information about the performance of the organization. Such information includes data related to production (revenues, costs, sales, profits, cost structure); customer satisfaction; and benchmarks with other companies.

- Rewards for high performance, including adjusting the compensation structure to be aligned with the behaviors, outcomes, and capabilities required for high performance. Employees may be paid on the basis of the knowledge and skills needed in the work environment to get the job done. There also may be

performance-based pay that is allocated on a group or team basis and may include profit sharing, gain sharing or group-based salary bonuses, for instance (Mohrman, Mohrman & Lawler, 1991).

In sum, Lawler's model posits that four resources -- knowledge, power, information and rewards -- create the conditions that enable employees within the organization to restructure for high performance. If SBM is viewed as a school improvement reform, Lawler's work suggests that districts need to transfer more than power over budget and personnel to the school site. Schools, like high performance organizations in the private sector, also need to involve the school community in professional development opportunities (knowledge and skills), to share information broadly, and to reward participants, if they are to be successful at restructuring curriculum and instruction and improving school performance.

In the study reported here, Lawler's notion of high involvement management offered a framework for evaluating SBM. The suitability of the framework to schools is suggested by Lawler's findings that high involvement management is most appropriate for service organizations that engage in knowledge production; that exist in a changing environment and have complex job tasks requiring constant decision making; and that are characterized by interdependence among tasks within the organization. All of these traits apply to schools (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992; Lawler, Mohrman & Mohrman, 1991). Also noteworthy is the fact that such learnings from the private sector were gleaned during a time when these organizations were faced with a situation currently confronting American public schools -- namely performance that was not meeting the requirements of a changing environment, and few prospects of new money to infuse into the organization. The parallels between schools and organizations in the private sector where high involvement management has been successful argue for a test of a new paradigm for SBM. The new paradigm, built on learnings from the private sector, suggests that for schools to enjoy the greatest success in improving performance, power would be devolved to the school site,

and there would be an emphasis on increasing the knowledge and skills, information, and rewards at the school level. With those resources, critical conditions necessary for creating a high performance organization would be present and schools would have the capability of implementing strategies for improving school performance.

The Study

The basic research question guiding this study was whether and under what conditions SBM, when combined with ambitious curriculum and instruction reforms, could improve school performance. In one sense this research was a study of the contribution of SBM as a school improvement strategy. The research also was concerned with specifying the conditions that enabled schools to improve. Our research applied the high-involvement model and examined:

1) Mechanisms that existed for decentralizing knowledge, power, information and rewards in schools and how they worked; 2) How SBM reforms combined with reforms in the areas of curriculum and instruction to improve school performance; and 3) Factors that were important to the successful implementation of SBM. We also were interested in a comparative perspective that would inform why SBM in some schools produced change in curriculum and instructional practices -- what we called active restructuring -- while other schools in the same district were struggling and little change had occurred.

The Districts

Past research has shown that SBM is everywhere and nowhere (Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). Everywhere because school systems all over the country are involved in SBM (Clune & White, 1988; Malen, Ogawa & Kranz, 1990) and nowhere because the extent of decision making responsibility devolved to the school is limited (Clune & White, 1988; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Wohlstetter & Buffett, 1992). In selecting districts for this research, the aim was to focus on exemplary SBM districts, so that the phenomenon we

wanted to examine was in fact in place. Using a nomination procedure that involved consulting with university researchers, federal, state and local policy makers, and practitioners including district and school-level educators,[1] districts were identified and screened to ensure that: SBM had been underway for three or four years; significant budgetary authority had been devolved to schools; and there was a strong push (either from the state, the district or the school) for curriculum and instruction reform.

The research reported here is based on data collected in four school districts in North America -- Edmonton, Canada; Jefferson County, Kentucky; Prince William County, Virginia; and San Diego, California.[2] The districts typically adopted SBM about four years ago; at the extreme was Edmonton where the first pilot began in the late 1970s. Schools in the sample districts generally had substantial authority in terms of the budget: They were able to some extent to decide the mix of personnel (although state law and union contracts constrained this in some districts), to carry-over some funds from one year to the next and to purchase some services from outside the district. All four districts were implementing SBM in combination with curriculum and instructional reform, but there was variation in terms of who was providing the instructional guidance system. In San Diego and Jefferson County, the state provided direction in the areas of curriculum and instructional reform. In Prince William County, the district played the key role, although curriculum reform was lagging the implementation of SBM. In Edmonton, the school was primarily responsible for curricular and/or instructional change.

Aside from the screening criteria, districts were selected to represent a range of school-based management policies. Three of the districts we studied mandated that schools

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[1] In September 1992, a national conference was held in Washington, D.C. to present findings from the literature review that constituted the first year of this research project and to solicit input from a range of audiences -- federal, state and local policy makers and practitioners -- on its future direction, including the nomination of school districts that held potential for future study.

[2] Similar research methods were used to study SBM schools in Victoria, Australia. The research results are reported in A. Odden, School-Based Management: The Australia Experience (October, 1993).

adopt SBM; the one exception was Jefferson County where SBM was voluntary and the vote to adopt SBM was a school-level decision. Some plans -- in Jefferson County and San Diego -- required site councils with heavy teacher involvement; in Edmonton and Prince William, SBM plans empowered principals, although in Prince William the principals were explicitly directed to involve teachers and the community in decisions and planning. In terms of the catalyst for reform, superintendents typically initiated the move to SBM among our four districts. However, in Jefferson County the teachers' union also played a major role: the reform was brought to the negotiating table and enacted through contract language.

In each of the four districts, we studied six schools -- two elementary, two middle/junior and two high schools. Aside from including schools at all three levels, we selected schools that exhibited a range of success in making changes and improving performance in order to determine what conditions are present when SBM leads to improvements in teaching and learning. At each level of schooling, an attempt was made to study one actively restructuring school that had been successful in making concrete changes in the areas of curriculum and instruction, and one struggling school that was active with SBM but far less successful in making changes. In order to accommodate the study design, we focused our research in large school districts. The enrollment in San Diego was approximately 125,000 students. In Jefferson County, there were about 95,000 students. Prince William County enrolled 45,000 students and the student population in Edmonton, Canada was about 79,000 during the 1992-93 school year.

Study Methods

To gain an understanding of SBM and the conditions leading to school improvement, each district was visited by a team of three researchers for one week. During that period, interviews were conducted at the district office with the superintendent, four assistant superintendents (for school-based management/restructuring,

curriculum/instruction, personnel and finance), selected school board members and the union president -- a total of about eight individuals in each district office. Site visits to schools typically included interviews with the following people: the principal, vice-principal, members of the site council (including administrators, teachers and parents), union chair, resource specialists or selected department chairs, and approximately four other teachers with differing perspectives on SBM and curriculum/instructional change. The interviews focused on the chronology and implementation of SBM, its form and context, and its impacts on teaching and learning, on the organization of the school, the school district, and on the various participants and stakeholders. At the district-level, a total of 38 interviews were conducted across the four districts. At the school-level, we averaged about seven interviews per site for a total of 157 interviews.

In addition to interviews, faculties at school campuses were asked to complete a short survey. The survey was designed as a broader check on the attitudes of the staff regarding SBM than was possible from the subset of staff who were interviewed. The survey asked respondents to rate how satisfied they were with SBM, the amount of influence different campus constituencies had on SBM, how much support existed for SBM and to what extent SBM had influenced campus outcomes. Open-ended questions asked participants to identify factors that facilitated and were a barrier to the application of SBM to the improvement of teaching and learning on campus.

The discussion, which follows, reports on information gleaned from 24 schools in four districts. Slightly more than half of the schools we studied were classified as actively restructuring, based on their success in making changes aimed at improving instructional effectiveness; the other half were classified as struggling -- schools that were active with SBM but where classroom practice and organization for instruction had not changed much. Some of the changes in curriculum and instruction that had been instituted in actively restructuring schools included: team teaching; non-graded, mixed ability groups;

cooperative learning; writing across the curriculum; inter-disciplinary instruction, and hands-on instruction (performance events).

The methodology employed is a comparative case analysis. Researchers wrote rich case descriptions of SBM, school improvement areas and organizational features including mechanisms for sharing knowledge, information, power and rewards in each school. The cases were then examined to find patterns where actively restructuring schools differed from struggling schools in these areas. This paper describes those patterns.

Results and Discussion

Knowledge

In traditional school districts, professional development activities focus on training related to curriculum and instruction, and compared to the private sector, the investment is generally fairly skimpy. Consider, for example, that businesses in the private sector on average devote about 1.4% of payroll costs to training, while schools commonly expend as little as 0.5% of the budget on training (Bradley, 1993). As schools under SBM take over management responsibilities from the district, the need for technical know-how expands beyond content and pedagogy to include functional skills (e.g., budgeting) and skills related to SBM, such as group problem-solving, conflict resolution and time management.

Across the four districts, the teachers' contract dictated the number of staff development days that each campus was responsible for delivering. Two of the districts we studied created new organizational arrangements to supply support services to schools. Jefferson County had extensive staff development opportunities available to schools through the Gheens Academy, the staff development office of the district, with an annual budget of more than one million dollars. The district's priority on professional development was also evidenced by the status accorded the director of Gheens -- a position that was at the associate superintendent level and in the superintendent's cabinet. Furthermore, when schools in Jefferson County voted to adopt SBM, the district provided

extra money for professional development. Edmonton, Canada also offered extensive staff development through its Staff Development Office, directed by the Associate Superintendent for Consulting Services. Consultants were available for customized campus training and teachers frequently traveled to the district office for development activities, which were offered after school hours and on weekends to encourage teacher participation. Edmonton also supported a large professional library for teachers and administrators, as did the Gheens Academy in Jefferson County. Such initiatives contrast sharply with recent findings suggesting that staff development funds typically are among the first to be cut in tight budget times "because its importance hasn't been recognized and because political realities make it an easy mark" (Bradley, 1993, p. 17). On the other hand, the picture was not entirely rosy in the four SBM districts. San Diego was in the middle of significant budget problems and viewed their inability to support extensive staff development was a barrier to effective SBM implementation. Prince William County invested heavily in staff development for principals, and then they relied on principals to develop their staffs, an approach that achieved unequal success. District administrators in both these districts felt they had under estimated the extent of staff development required to support SBM.

In the area of knowledge and skill development, there were identifiable differences between actively restructuring and struggling schools. In actively restructuring schools, there was intense interest in professional development, and professional development was viewed as an ongoing process for every teacher in the school and the principal. In ratings of professional culture, for instance, respondents typically felt teachers were extremely oriented toward "continuous improvement." Such schools worked to build the capacity of the entire staff to help manage the school. School-wide staff development also helped to promote a professional community among faculty and to develop a common knowledge base among all members. The content of the training, likewise, tended to cover a wide range of areas from budgeting and scheduling to curriculum and instruction areas (i.e.,

team teaching, writing across the curriculum). Staff at actively restructuring schools also took advantage of opportunities to receive management training focused on shared decision making skills like how to run effective meetings or how to build consensus.

Struggling schools, on the other hand, had more sporadic training for staff and, beyond required development days, offered few opportunities for whole school development. Whereas actively restructuring schools often had an emphasis on bringing whole faculties together sometimes for an extended period of time, like at a retreat for a few days, schools that were struggling tended to continue to view staff development more as an individual activity. The Gheens Academy in Jefferson County publicly encouraged schools to send cross-role teams and had a general preference for training people from the same school in groups, rather than individuals from many different schools. Professional development opportunities at schools that were struggling were more in line with findings from earlier research on SBM -- namely that training typically was too general/standardized or so narrow that it didn't speak to the day-to-day realities of the school (Johnson & Boles, in press). In sum, professional development activities in actively restructuring schools were broadened to include a larger proportion of the staff and to include a wider range of knowledge and skills than are found in traditional districts and in the struggling schools we studied. These findings complement those from a recent study of Chicago school reform where researchers concluded that successful schools had moved toward "more sustained, school-wide staff development" (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1993, p. 26).

Traditionally, in-service training and other staff development workshops are conducted by administrators from the district office who not only deliver the training but also decide its content and timing. By contrast, in SBM schools professional development typically is a bottom-up activity where school-level actors define their own needs and how services will be delivered (Wohlstetter & Buffett, 1992). In actively restructuring schools, sources of training outside of district offerings and even outside of traditional education circles often were tapped. For example in Jefferson County, representatives from Rohm

and Haas, a chemical company, trained school staff in group problem solving, participation, management and leadership skills, and many of the principals in the district went through South Central Bell's management training program. Two actively restructuring schools in Prince William County sent administrators and several teachers to Xerox workshops on Total Quality Management . The teachers later conducted in-services at the school sites to train colleagues. In addition, many of the actively restructuring schools applied for available grants that provided staff development funds to stimulate school reform. There was a notable absence of such activities in the struggling schools.

Our findings in this area support the importance of capacity building for redesigning organizations. Actively restructuring schools generally sought out resources for and implemented higher levels of professional development and involved more of the school community in training. These patterns suggest two important connections between professional development and SBM: 1) it is difficult for schools to accept responsibility for management (and for organizational outcomes) without technical know-how; and 2) school staffs who direct local governance activities to school reform actively seek out staff development to build new capabilities. The importance of this finding is underscored by previous research in SBM schools that found both limited attention to professional development and a preoccupation among participants with process over outcomes (Ogawa & White, in press; Johnson & Boles, in press).

Power

By definition, SBM schools have power structures that are different from most public schools in America. In traditional schools, initiatives tend to emanate from the top of the organizational hierarchy with the superintendent and school board. By contrast, SBM schools are places where significant authority has been devolved from the district office to the school campus and initiatives come more often from the schools themselves. Policy decisions related to how power should be decentralized to schools focus on two

major issues -- who should be empowered at the school site and how much power should they have. In the four districts we studied, there was some variation in terms of where such policies were set. In Jefferson County and Prince William County, SBM plans largely were designed by schools that were allowed to set their own parameters, including the composition of the council and the choice of who could chair. In San Diego, the district and union issued broad guidelines, including specification of teacher membership ratios for the councils. The change agendas of the councils were left to the school to decide, although school plans and goals were required in several districts.

This section examines three issues related to the devolving of power and its influence on the capacity of the school to restructure itself: 1) The participative structures, 2) the principal's role, and 3) the amount of authority devolved.

The Participative Structure. Councils at SBM schools typically consisted of elected representatives of various stakeholders in the school (e.g., teachers, parents, classified employees and campus administrators). Interestingly, councils under specific mandates did not look all that different from councils designed under loose guidelines in terms of membership, leadership and areas of jurisdiction. Edmonton was the only district of the four where no council was created at the school site; all teachers were considered part of the governing body and principals devised their own methods (usually informal) for obtaining teacher input. For the parents' perspective, Edmonton schools consulted their specially-created parent advisory councils. The role of this body was not to design policy, but to provide input on parents' views and desires that the school then could incorporate into its decisions.

Once site councils were created, schools, particularly the actively restructuring ones, tended to further disperse power at the site by creating subcommittees. A common conclusion in research on SBM is that teachers become frustrated and burned-out from the enormous workload of teaching and managing. Subcommittees allowed greater numbers

of teachers to participate in the formal decision making process and also seemed to help reduce the burden on any one teacher.

The subcommittees, which were structured around issues related to schooling such as curriculum, assessment and professional development, also seemed to focus teacher energy and interactions on specific work tasks, not abstractions like "culture" or "empowerment." Hannaway (1993) found similar benefits to subcommittees in her study of two school districts that had decentralized effectively . Subcommittees in some actively restructuring schools tended to serve as work groups for the site council, alternately receiving ideas from the council to develop and submitting ideas/recommendations to the council for approval. In other schools, subcommittees initiated activity, receiving input and ultimately approval from the council.

Membership of the subcommittees typically was some combination of teachers who served on the council and those who did not. In some actively restructuring schools, non-council teachers chaired the subcommittees. These schools tended to view subcommittees as a further dispersion of power on campus; the subcommittee structure allowed greater numbers of teachers to hold leadership positions. Other schools had council members chair the subcommittees. Respondents from these schools tended to view the subcommittee chairs as liaisons to the council and during interviews, focused on the need for a tight link between the school site council and its subcommittees.

The profile of a fairly representative actively restructuring school included an eleven-member governance council composed of the principal and seven teachers elected by each of the teaching teams. Parents and classified employees also served on the council. Although members were elected to serve, council meetings were open and in this school any faculty member attending the meeting enjoyed full privileges, including being able to vote. The school had six standing committees: 1) instructional materials, 2) students services, 3) staffing and budget, 4) planning, 5) curriculum and 6) professional development. The chair and vice-chair of each subcommittee were non-council teachers,

although each committee had council teachers, too. Ad hoc committees were created as needed; scheduling, for example, was handled through an ad hoc committee.

The effectiveness of the councils tended to differentiate actively restructuring and struggling schools. Struggling schools got bogged down in establishing power relationships on campus. These schools expended large amounts of energy formalizing who was empowered. The majority of struggling schools had strict guidelines that delineated authority. They tended to empower a subgroup of the faculty and to have only a limited number of mechanisms for involving faculty in decision making. Furthermore, the guidelines that delineated who had power were very clear leading to feelings of "we" -- the empowered -- and "them". One struggling school in San Diego spent almost a year developing a governance document that strictly delineated power roles. The document established, for example, that only the elected teacher representative, or their alternate in the event of the elected member's absence, could speak at council meetings. Further, only the elected member, not the alternate, was able to vote. The Consortium on Chicago School Research (1993), likewise, found that in schools with "adversarial politics," conflicts about power tended to dominate discussions and the schools' ability to focus on improvement efforts was greatly diminished.

It also was common for principals in struggling schools to be involved in a power struggle with their staff. This frequently was precipitated by the disjuncture between the principal's espoused view of how the school worked -- participatory management -- and her/his own management style. It especially became evident when the principal's personal values were in conflict with actions advocated by the council. In one struggling school where the council adopted a "zero tolerance for fighting" policy -- meaning that any student involved in a physical altercation was subject to immediate suspension -- the principal actively undermined the council's decision by not enforcing it, even though the policy was incorporated into the student handbook. Thus, when teachers sent students to the office for fighting, they were not likely to be suspended, especially if it were their first offense. The

non-support of the principal had alienated and divided staff, and the school consequently was spending lots of time on issues of control.

The Role of the Principal. Successful principals were able to motivate staff and create a team feeling on campus, as well as guiding and providing a vision for the school. Notably, there was little difference in leadership style between Edmonton, on the one hand, where the principal was the key decision maker and the other districts where the site council had more authority. In the private sector, research by Peters and Austin (1985) stresses the importance of MBWA -- "management by wandering around." Principals at actively restructuring schools often employed this technique by routinely engaging faculty in timely and informal conversations in the halls away from their offices. In addition, these principals almost always were characterized as entrepreneurial. They sought out grant opportunities and then encouraged faculty to.write proposals for the funding of innovations that addressed school-initiated concerns, like the integration of technology across the curriculum. Successful principals also typically served as a liaison to the outside world with regard to educational research and practice, gathering information to share with teachers at faculty meetings and the like. Research and innovative approaches, such as Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences, Caught in the Middle, or Deming's Total Quality Management, was disseminated frequently and often used to improve instruction on campus. Many principals viewed themselves as an information clearinghouse.

Many of our findings regarding principal leadership echo findings from research on effective schools (Purkey & Smith, 1985, 1983; Wilson & Corcoran, 1987; Austin & Holowenzak, 1985) and more recent studies of school decentralization (Bimber, 1993; Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1993). Principals in the actively restructuring schools were highly regarded by the faculty -- "this school runs like a tight machine because of strong leadership." However, contrary to previous research, we found that in several actively restructuring schools the principals were moving away from the role of

instructional leader toward more of a managerial role. The principals worked to shield teachers from concerns in which the teachers had little vested interest or expertise, so that they -- "the instructional experts" -- could concentrate on teaching. One principal, for example, increased his visibility in the community to encourage parents to come directly to him with non-instructional problems, which then could be resolved without infringing on faculty time.

The Amount of Authority. With regard to the amount of power decentralized, this study did not find a strong simple relationship between the absolute amount of authority a school has and its capacity to restructure. Findings suggest, however, that a minimum threshold of authority -- focused on factors that affect teaching -- is a necessary condition for active restructuring. The level of authority a campus has is typically dictated by the model employed by the district the school is in. Schools in our sample had significant authority over budget -- most controlled a lump sum budget; personnel -- schools to some extent controlled the mix of staff positions; and curricular decisions -- within state and local constraints, schools could make operational decisions about curriculum delivery.

Like previous research (Wohlstetter & Buffett, 1992; Clune & White, 1988), we found that the first area of control that schools attained was usually some degree of budgetary authority. At least part of the budget of the schools in our sample was allocated to the campus as a lump sum. The primary complaint of both actively restructuring and struggling schools was that after paying salaries and other fixed costs, few discretionary dollars remained. Indeed, upwards of 90-95% of the school budget was often determined before dollars were allocated to the school site.

The budgeting process was another area that differentiated actively restructuring and struggling schools. Just as actively restructuring schools tended to disperse power throughout the organization, the majority of them also involved multiple stakeholders in the budget process. The schools made an effort to focus attention on the needs of the whole

school rather than balkanizing the needs of academic departments or teaching teams. For example, a principal of an actively restructuring school in Prince William County made a special end-of-the-year budget to keep faculty focused on the school as a whole. At the end of the school year, the principal asked department heads to pool any funds remaining in departmental budgets, so they could be spent to benefit the whole school. Then a faculty meeting was held to decide how to spend the money. To facilitate decision making, each department drew up a wish list of things they thought were needed to improve instruction in the school. At the meeting, faculty discussed the lists and decided what they believed would have the most significance on the school as a whole. Through this process, academic departments were placed in the context of the whole school.

Control over personnel meant that the campus was able to hire staff that conformed to the culture of the school and to create a mix of staff positions that supported the teaching and learning strategies of the campus. The majority of schools in our sample had some control over teachers that were hired, although schools typically had to hire teachers from district approved lists. It was common for the central administration to make the first cut and then send schools a slate to select from. However, it was also possible for schools to reject an entire slate and request additional possibilities. One complaint of many actively restructuring schools in our sample concerned the acceptance of teacher transfers. While schools often were given wide latitude in selecting new hires, the same schools were often required to accept transfers from within the district. Frequently these teachers were seen as undesirable, often because they did not fit the emerging approaches to teaching and learning; said one principal, "It's a turkey trot."

Actively restructuring schools tended to utilize authority over the mix of positions in innovative ways to support teaching and learning. For example, itinerant resource teachers frequently were hired in different combinations to cover classrooms, so that groups of teachers could have regularly scheduled common planning periods.

All of the schools in our sample could make some curricular decisions on the campus. They described themselves as having control over the "how's" of the instructional program. Generally, the "what's" of the instructional program were outlined in district or state guidelines. Teachers in actively restructuring schools have achieved greater agreement about instructional direction. This direction was provided in part by some combination of state or district frameworks or outside reformers, such as the Coalition of Essential Schools or the National Alliance for Restructuring Education. But achieving collective agreement required discussions, offsites and collective planning. Perhaps the most significant common element across actively restructuring schools was the extent to which organizational mechanisms were in place that generated interactions for school-level actors around issues related to curriculum and instruction. Likewise, in actively restructuring schools in Chicago where researchers found sustained discussions about educational issues, time had been set aside for teachers to meet, and places were made available for teachers to congregate and talk (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1993).

Many of the elementary schools and some of the middle and high schools that were actively restructuring created teaching teams or houses, where a group of teachers (usually 4-6) were responsible for instructing a cohort of students. Decisions regarding curriculum and instruction usually were decentralized to the teaching teams or to a curriculum subcommittee and through such vehicles, teachers had ongoing task-related contact with one another. For example, one curriculum subcommittee at an elementary school solicited ideas in the areas of science, math, language arts and physical education from teachers school-wide to develop an interdisciplinary curriculum framework on health. The product of this effort, with contributions from nearly all staff members, was a curriculum designed to promote healthy lifestyles among students of all ages and abilities. Lesson plans in the curriculum spanned a variety of health-related topics -- the nutritional value of foods, measurement, physical exercise, communication, creativity and safety -- and tapped a range of skills. In one lesson, for instance, students first read and compared nutrition labels on

food containers, and then recorded information about the amount of saturated fat, sodium and sugar in different foods. With this information, the students next used math skills to calculate the recommended daily intake of these "three evil S's of foods." At the end of the lesson, as an assessment mechanism, students used their new knowledge to plan a creative meal within specified levels of fats and calories.

Besides teaching teams and curriculum subcommittees, school schedules in actively restructuring schools often were redesigned to encourage teacher interaction. One frequently used method was a common planning period for teachers at the same level or in the same subject area. Teachers used this time to develop curriculum and share lesson plans. In addition, some schools went so far as to add an extra period to the school day to allow for planning; sometimes this required a waiver from local policy or the teaching contract.

In addition to the large role of site councils, and local school administration, superintendents worked actively to help create the capacity for high involvement. Superintendents were largely aiders and abettors, moving central offices from a directive role toward a service orientation and offering resources (e.g., professional development) to support/encourage school-level change. The district office in Jefferson County offered extra money for professional development to encourage schools to move to SBM. All four superintendents led the charge to develop a service orientation in the district office. All had flattened and downsized the hierarchy in the central office. The Jefferson County superintendent gave each principal the number of a "lightening rod" to call in the district office if they had a problem. If the principal did not get a satisfactory response from the lightening rod, then the superintendent instructed the principals to call him directly. Superintendents in many of the sample districts also worked hard to develop a district-wide culture that encouraged risk-taking by schools.

Information

In private sector organizations, as in public schools, information about the system historically has been available primarily at the top of the organization. In the United States, the most widely available information about a school are student test scores and those are routinely disseminated from the top of the organization down the hierarchy to the school-level. Information sharing in actively restructuring SBM schools contrasted sharply with this norm: first, the kinds of information disseminated were much broader and second, there was a strong focus on sharing within individual school communities.

Similar to the effective schools research (Lezotte, 1989; Edmonds, 1979), we also found that most actively restructuring schools that we studied had a vision statement, delineating the goals and mission of the school. As would be expected, vision statements focused on the technical core of schooling and often were nested within a district or state framework, depending upon the source of the instructional guidance system. We also observed that by focusing on the goal of schooling, faculties in actively restructuring schools got away from concerns about the governance process -- the kinds of issues that seemed to stymie the struggling schools. The process of writing a vision statement most frequently was a school-wide effort that tended to draw faculties together toward an established purpose. Many actively restructuring schools used professional development days to "retreat" and define the mission and goals for the school. Once completed, the faculty felt they shared ownership in the vision and felt responsible for implementing it successfully. Across all four districts that we studied, school boards had implemented some kind of choice plan. Such policies seemed to force schools to be concerned about attendance and within our sample, resulted in a strong push by schools, particularly the actively restructuring ones, to develop mission statements that distinguished them from their competitors in the district.

Benchmarking information, how the school was doing relative other schools, was often overlooked in the schools we visited. In some cases, even when information was available on campus, only the principal or other school administrators were aware of it. Even in the actively restructuring schools, educators tended to dismiss the relevance of these data.

In Edmonton, there were strong district initiatives to collect and disseminate information to stakeholders. For the past thirteen years, the district has conducted annual surveys of students and staff. In addition, there is a biannual survey of parents and the general public. The biannual surveys are staggered so parents are scheduled one year and the general public the next. The survey results, which focus on the extent to which constituents are satisfied with their school, are released every fall and campuses use the information to identify areas that might need to be changed or improved. The district also sponsors regularly scheduled meetings of school staff at the district office and "key communicators" -- that is, parents who are designated at each school to get information from the district and to disseminate it. All four districts that we studied also had developed or were developing a computer network, electronically linking schools to the district office. However, school-level interviews suggested the networks were not often tapped -- for dialogues between teachers or administrators within or across schools, or between the central office and schools.

In Hannaway's study of two decentralized districts (1993), she also found high levels of information sharing and concluded that such interactions often were a consequence of district initiatives. Here we found that information sharing tended to be primarily a school responsibility with some encouragement from the district office, like in Edmonton. All actively restructuring schools had *multiple* mechanisms for communicating information to stakeholders. For instance, schools routinely communicated in writing to faculty what was happening at the school and, to a lesser extent, the district. Information was placed in teacher mailboxes or made available in a central location, such as the teachers

lounge. At the very least, actively restructuring schools made council meeting agendas and minutes available to staff. Many actively restructuring schools also provided teachers with the school budget, student achievement results and information about the curriculum.

Other mechanisms that helped facilitate the flow of information within restructuring schools were common planning periods for teachers and the subcommittee structure. During planning periods, teachers communicated with one another about what they are doing. Thematic units often are implemented school-wide, and lesson plans were shared and modified to use with children of different ages. The subcommittees, which were focused on work tasks, also helped to coordinate the flow of information and work across classrooms and grade levels. Struggling schools, on the other hand, tended to have few mechanisms for sharing information. Further, mechanisms that were in place tended to be informal. At struggling schools, the teacher grapevine was the most frequently cited means of communication. Information shared in this way tended to be incomplete and unsystematic; scarce information, moreover, tended to breed suspicion and was more common in struggling schools.

Among the actively restructuring schools, there was a strong customer service orientation and a strong interest in satisfying the customer. Actively restructuring schools seemed to feel they owed information to the community and consequently, made special efforts to assure that parents were fully apprised of what was happening on campus. The majority of schools had newsletters that were sent to parents, often on a weekly basis. The newsletters included information about the school's budget, student performance data, SBM data (e.g., election results and decisions from council meetings) and curriculum information (e.g., instructional themes for the year). Frequently, parental input was solicited through the newsletters. Actively restructuring schools also used teacher/parent conferences to communicate with parents about school policies and school performance.

Aside from mechanisms within schools, there were innovative mechanisms usually established by the central office to ensure communication between SBM schools and the

district. For example, schools in Edmonton, Canada, are divided into seven regions and each region is made up of schools without regard to geographic area or grade level. Principals from the regions meet monthly at the central office to discuss what is going on across schools and at the district-level. Further, monthly meetings are held horizontally between elementary, junior and senior high principals. San Diego also keeps schools networked though district-level department meetings. Department chairs from individual schools attend the meetings where district-wide curriculum issues are discussed. Principals also meet in groups with the superintendent once a month. In Jefferson County, principal liaison groups, composed of eight or nine members, give principals an opportunity to share information horizontally with other schools, and vertically with the superintendent.

In conclusion, the schools we studied had many mechanisms in place that encouraged high levels of interaction and information sharing within school communities and across schools. This horizontal orientation is in sharp contrast to the thrust of many SBM plans which typically stress how information ought to be shared *vertically* between individual schools and the district office, usually focused on whether schools are adhering to regulatory policies (Johnson & Boles, in press).

Rewards

Rewarding stakeholders for their efforts was one area where actively restructuring and struggling schools showed few differences: Rewards for performance were almost nonexistent. For instance, there were no financial rewards in any of the districts we studied for work directly related to being an actively restructuring school. Jefferson County rewarded schools who voted to adopt SBM with extra money for professional development, which was a district investment in the development of new capabilities, not a reward for performance or outcomes. Rewards for desired behaviors included reduced courseloads for grant writing and sometimes stipends for attending staff development activities during the summer or on weekends. These were especially utilized in the actively

restructuring schools, reflecting both their higher level of improvement activities and their entrepreneurial activity to secure extender funds.

Recognition was the most frequent mode of rewarding staff both in actively restructuring and struggling schools. It was common for principals to write thank-you notes to staff. One principal at an actively restructuring school in Edmonton described thanking teachers as, "...the daily dose. That's my main job -- to provide a support system for teachers." Another method was to include teacher kudos in school newsletters. Sometimes teachers acknowledged colleagues by putting congratulatory notes, candy bars and sodas in their school mailboxes. A very actively restructuring school had a large trophy that moved from classroom to classroom as new approaches were implemented successfully. A few schools selected a *Teacher of the Year*, and many teachers were nominated for state and community awards.

In some schools, group rewards generally were favored over individual rewards. Some principals stressed the importance of moving away from the idea of winners and losers in order to create a sense of community; thus, in those schools individual recognition among students, as well as faculty and staff, often was not done. Instead, whole faculties were rewarded with staff development activities (accompanied by free dinners), flowers and parties at the end of the school year. One principal had custom-designed cups with the school motto made for everyone. PTAs also helped reward teachers by hosting faculty recognition nights or breakfasts.

Sometimes whole-school rewards for desirable behavior were embedded in district SBM plans. The SBM plan in Edmonton, for instance, offered schools the option of paying their own utility bills and any savings derived could be used by the school as they saw fit. In all four districts where SBM schools were able to carry-over surplus funds, the reward for being frugal was the ability to build-up a discretionary fund for special projects or needs.

"Showing off" was sometimes used to instill a sense of pride in the school. At an actively restructuring school in Jefferson County, the walls in the teachers' lounge and the office hallway were filled with framed awards, newspaper clippings and thank-you letters. There is a saying in the school that if you say something good about the school and stand still long enough someone will put you up on the wall. Principals in these actively restructuring schools typically took an active role in public relations activities aimed at increasing the school's visibility in the community. In part this was a method of developing community understanding, acceptance and pride in the changes that were being made.

Extrinsic rewards were not the only ones that kept teachers motivated. Intrinsic satisfaction also was highlighted during interviews. For instance, teachers found it rewarding to have the power to influence decisions; to be innovative in curriculum and instruction; and to be better able to respond to student needs. At a struggling school in Edmonton, the principal noted that teachers do their job for one reason: they believe what they are doing is important. At another struggling school, a teacher commented, "Are there supposed to be rewards for good teaching? In education, I thought you did it because you liked to do it. If I were in business, I might expect a little more." A similar thought was expressed by another teacher at a struggling school in San Diego: "Believing you're doing the right things makes the school a better place for teachers and students." The atmosphere of an actively restructuring school in Prince William County was described as one where teachers received psychic satisfaction from their work and celebrated each others' successes. As one teacher from an actively restructuring school in Edmonton commented, "We do this because we want to -- we like it." In sum, teachers in both the actively restructuring and struggling schools we studied found the practice of educating rewarding in itself. The idea that teachers are intrinsically motivated is not new to educational research (see for example Smylie & Smart, 1990; Cohen, 1983).

The lack of extrinsic reward structures in schools is not surprising since translating the concept of decentralized reward structures to schools is probably the greatest challenge to SBM. Skill-based pay schemes in high involvement private sector organizations reward employees for the knowledge and skills they possess. By contrast, the conventional compensation system in education uses indirect, proxy measures of knowledge and skills, namely years of education (level of degree) and years of teaching experience (tenure) (Odden & Conley, 1992). The situation is further complicated by the fact that teacher compensation is negotiated through a union contract, and unions prefer schools and teachers to be treated uniformly throughout the district, which of course flies in the face of differential pay -- the natural consequence of a decentralized reward system. On the horizon, however, are school districts, such as Littleton County, Colorado, that in cooperation with the union are experimenting with differential pay schemes that link teacher pay to teaching skills.

In education, the lack of rewards for performance also may be linked to the issue of measurement. As noted earlier, proxy measures are used to assess teachers' skills, although the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards appears promising in this regard. The Board's assessments, which will be different from any current teacher evaluations, will "stress teachers' knowledge of their students and demonstrated ability to work with other teachers to improve local schools" (Wirt & Kirst, 1992, p. 364). Local school districts in the future could use the Board's certification assessments to develop a skills-based pay system.

There also is the problem in education of measuring organizational performance. In spite of national movements to develop educational goals and curriculum standards, there remains scant evidence that districts have bought into these and that the guidelines are driving curriculum and instructional change in classrooms. Consequently, little consensus exists at the school-level over the goals of education and there are few quantifiable measures beyond student test data. The results of this study -- where districts were

selected based on the presence of an instructional guidance system and the actively restructuring schools had an agreed-to direction -- suggest that empowering *schools* may not lead to restructured reward systems within schools. Innovations to decentralize rewards likely will demand a broad and deep systemic change, involving multiple actors at all levels of the public education system.

Focus on Instructional Improvement

This research found that establishing school-site councils does not automatically lead to their application to improve teaching and learning. Schools in these districts varied greatly along this dimension. Across the districts and schools we studied, several characteristics surfaced as key to the capacity of the school level participants to address SBM energies to restructuring. First, all actively restructuring schools had organizational mechanisms in place that generated interactions for school-level actors around issues related to curriculum and instruction. In struggling schools, teacher isolation continued to be the prevalent culture. The actively restructuring schools we studied offered stories of cross-role training and of teachers in similar positions being trained together; of information being shared by teachers across classrooms and grade levels; and of faculties working together on teaching teams, subcommittees and school site councils. Thus there were many opportunities for school site employees to mutually influence the emerging direction of the school. While the high levels of interaction created a sense of community, the instructional guidance system -- regardless of whether it emanated from the state or the district -- provided an agreed-to direction that effectively focused interactions on teaching and learning. In essence, the instructional guidance system served as a resource to schools, providing a direction for school-based change. Our struggling schools operated in a context where the instructional guidance mechanism was present, but school level employees were not directing their energies in that direction. They were concerned

primarily with who controls the school. They had relatively impoverished mechanisms for convening school dialogues in general, and around instructional issues in particular.

A related characteristic of actively restructuring schools was a written vision statement that typically was nested within the state or district's instructional guidance system. There was consensus among faculties about where they were, where they wanted to be and how they were going to get there. The principal played a strong leadership role in helping the faculty to articulate a vision by presenting ideas for innovation and by providing the time and support for effective group process. The vision seemed to frame the discussion of school improvement across decentralized work groups and provided a common purpose for faculty to rally behind.

Actively restructuring schools also often had established strong ties with organizations and associates outside the school for professional development and information-sharing. Schools sought expert advice beyond the district and even beyond traditional educational circles. Some actively restructuring schools tapped resources in the private sector for management training and for building-up their technology capabilities. In sum, we began to see evidence that actively restructuring schools, like effective organizations in the private sector, were optimizing (as opposed to maximizing): they were doing what they were good at and relying on others to do what they were good at.

Conclusion

The research reported here has focused on the utility of SBM for enabling the restructuring of schools for high performance. SBM, therefore, was studied in combination with an instructional guidance system that provided an agreed-to direction for curriculum and instruction. This research was concerned with the conditions that enable schools to create the capacity for high performance. Applying the framework of high involvement management, we hypothesized that school-level actors, in addition to being empowered, need training to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for creating a high

performance organization, need access to information about the performance of the organization; and need to be rewarded for their efforts. Thus, we were interested in testing a new, expanded definition of SBM that went beyond the traditional boundaries of shared power.

The importance of the first three factors of the Lawler model (knowledge and skills, information, and power) was confirmed in the comparison of actively restructuring and struggling schools. Those schools that were introducing significant change in the teaching and learning process had invested more heavily in the development of both team process skills and instructional staff development. They also had many more approaches to sharing information with multiple constituents. Finally, they had more mechanisms for participation in the governance of the school, and a greater percentage of the faculty were involved. The area that did not discriminate was the use of rewards, although the actively restructuring schools had found many ways to extend resources, and to provide extra compensation for teachers involved in developing new instructional approaches.

This research adds to our understanding of conditions that enable schools to manifest certain outcomes. If the intent is to improve school performance, we need to find approaches to SBM that direct the attention of school-level educators with expertise in teaching and learning toward that end, rather than toward management for the sake only of transferring control. We found no evidence that schools wanted to manage the daily operations of the organization beyond what was needed to effect change in teaching and learning. None of the schools we studied argued for a broader span of control to include managing the physical plant, for instance. School-based *management*, therefore, may be a misnomer. Instead, what we probably want are mechanisms that foster high levels of *involvement* by school-level participants in decisions related to the school's performance and in finding new approaches to improving performance. Relevant decision areas include professional development (knowledge and training for faculty); school budget; and personnel, including how faculties are constituted and compensated as well as technical

decisions about how to organize for and deliver teacher services. We also learned from this research the importance of combining SBM with ambitious curriculum and instruction reforms. SBM as a governance reform can act as the enabler or facilitator of school improvement, but without an instructional guidance system, there will be little agreement that improvements in teaching and learning are the goals of SBM.

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